

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUCAR 06348 300844Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5137
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 6348

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: IS, RO, OVIP (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
SUBJECT: BEGIN VISIT, FIRST READING - ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION
TO ISRAEL

REF: TEL AVIV 634?

1. I HAD A CHANCE TO TALK BRIEFLY TO PRIME MINISTER
BEGIN NEAR THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT THE EVENING OF
AUGUST 29. HE SAID HE WOULD BE WRITING TO THE PRESIDENT
TO SHARE WITH HIM SOME OF THE ASPECTS OF HIS EIGHT
HOURS OF TALKS WITH PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU IN WHICH THERE
WERE "MANY INTERESTING THINGS." HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD
BE SEEING AMBASSADOR LEWIS AND DCM VIETS EITHER THIS
FRIDAY OR EARLY NEXT WEEK, AND COMMENTED THAT THE
VIETS BRIEFING ON ROMANIA HAD BEEN IMPRESSIVELY HELPFUL
IN PREPARING HIM FOR HIS TALKS HERE.

2. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE HAD MADE ANY HEADWAY
ON THE JEWISH EMIGRATION QUESTION, HE REPLIED THAT HE FELT
HE HAD. CEAUSESCU HAD GIVEN HIM ASSURANCES THAT
EMIGRATION APPLICATIONS WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN A POSITIVE
SPIRIT, BUT ALSO ASKED HIM NOT TO TALK ABOUT THESE
ASSURANCES. BEGIN ADDED THAT MORE JEWS WOULD BE APPLY-
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ING SOON-"SEVERAL HUNDREDS" - TO TEST OUT THE PROMISES.
IN RESPONSE TO MY COMMENT THAT I THOUGHT THE TIME WAS
PROPITIOUS FOR TRYING TO GET CONCRETE RESULTS PROVIDED
ONE HAD A GOOD MEASURING STICK, HE SAID HE AGREED AND
HOPED THERE WOULD BE SOME USEFUL RESULTS TO BE SEEN
ALREADY BY OCTOBER OR SO.

3. JUST BEFORE PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND I STARTED TALKING BY OURSELVES, PRIME MINISTER MANESCU IN BEGIN'S HEARING TOLD ME I SHOULD BE SURE TO LET SENATORS JACKSON AND RIBICOFF KNOW THAT THE EMIGRATION PROBLEM HAD BEEN DISCUSSED HERE, AT WHICH POINT BEGIN SAID HE HAD PROMISED CEAUSESCU TO FILL JACKSON IN ON HIS TALKS IN ROMANIA WHEN JACKSON COMES TO ISRAEL IN NOVEMBER.

4. DIRECTOR OF DIASPORA AFFAIRS AVNER JOINED US FOR LAST PART OF CONVERSATION AND THEN WE TALKED SEPARATELY AS WELL. AVNER EXPLAINED THE PRIME MINISTER'S REFERENCE TO OCTOBER AS BEING TIED IN ALSO TO HIS OWN PLANS TO VISIT ROMANIA AGAIN AND HOPEFULLY TO GET SOME SENSE OF JEWISH LIFE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. HE SAID HIS FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE VERY CONFUSING - BE THEY OF CHIEF RABBI ROSEN OR ROMANIA IN GENERAL (HOW, HE ASKED, COULD A COUNTRY CONSIDERED SO STALINIST HAVE SUCH FRIENDLY PEOPLE) AND HE WANTS TO TRY TO ABSORB MORE. ON THE EMIGRATION QUESTION, HE SAID HE STILL HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE LISTS TECHNIQUES (CITING NOTES GIVEN TO HIM AT THE RECEPTION WE WERE ATTENDING BY JEWS WHO WANT TO LEAVE) BUT AGREED WITH MY ARGUMENT THAT YOU CAN'T MEASURE RESULTS WITHOUT A YARDSTICK, AND ADDED THAT HE WAS APPLYING ISRAELI YARDSTICKS TO A SITUATION WHERE HE NOW SAW THEY DIDN'T NECESSARILY APPLY.
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5. IN ANY CASE HE ASSURED ME ISRAEL DID NOT WANT TO PUT STICKS IN THE SPOKES OF US-ROMANIAN RELATIONS. IN THAT CONTEXT, I TOLD HIM VERY BRIEFLY OF MY HOPE THAT ENOUGH PROGRESS COULD BE MADE ON THE ROMANIAN JEWISH EMIGRATION QUESTION TO CREATE A RECEPTIVE ATMOSPHERE IN THE US CONGRESS TO MOVE NEXT YEAR FROM THE ANNUAL MFN REVIEW TO A MULTI-YEAR PROCEDURE. HE SAID HE WOULD LET ME KNOW WHEN HE IS RETURNING IN OCTOBER SO WE COULD TALK AT GREATER LENGTH.
BARNES

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